

# **HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION**

## **Quarterly Meeting**

**One Capitol Hill, Conference Room A**

**Providence, RI 02908**

**M I N U T E S of May 16, 2008**

**Susan Baxter, Chair, called the meeting of the RI Housing Resources Commission to order at 8:40 am in Conference Room A, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI. Present were:**

### **Commissioners & Designees:**

**Baxter, Susan-Chair**

**Bazinet, Kathy**

**Bodington, Susan**

**Caffey, Joe**

**Cola, Jeanne**

**Flynn, Kevin**

**Hajian, Kaveh**

**Hammarström, David**

**Hannifan, Chris**

**Kiesel, Marilyn**

**Kravitz, Tom**

**Nadeau, Gene**

**Novais, Ana**

**O'Rourke, Steve**

**Ryczek, Jim**

**Schwartz, Rhonda**

**Sekeres, Bonnie**

**Shorter, Eric for B. Fields**

**Tierney, Terence**

**Vanderslice, Bob**

**Van Noppen, Mark**

**Voccio, Valerie**

**Walsh, Peter**

**Coleman, Marcy-Legal Counsel**

**Staff:**

**Costa, Maria**

**Shawcross, Noreen**

**De Los Santos, Doris**

**Neirinckx, Ray**

**Price, Darlene**

**Tondra, Mike**

**Guests:**

**Holderman, Meredith**

**Clement, Brenda**

**Pursuant to Chapter 46 of Title 42 General Laws of Rhode Island, notice of this meeting was posted at the State House and at RI Housing Resources Commission offices.**

**Approval of March 14, 2008**

**David Hammarström made a motion to approve the minutes; Steve**

**O'Rourke**

**seconded. Motion was passed.**

### **Report of Chair**

**Susan Baxter provided the commission with a Report of the Chair (attached). She was pleased to announce that Neighborhood Opportunities operating funds was one of very few programs restored in FY 2008 Supplemental Budget. Funds were reduced to \$2.5 million. This amount will provide essential operating funding necessary for developers to close the gap between what tenants can pay in rent and the cost of operating a unit. Funding was a cooperative effort between administration and the General Assembly.**

**The Supplemental Budget specifies that this is solely for developments that were awarded NOP funds by the Commission on October 17, 2007.**

### **Annual report**

**HRC legislation requires an annual report of the commission's accomplishments. A copy of this report was sent to all Commissioners.**

**July 1, 2008 is the "official" anniversary of the HRC establishment.**

### **Appointments to Commission**

**Susan Baxter is pleased to announce that the Governor has appointed the following to serve as members of the Housing Resources Commission due to term limits:**

- **Denise Barge, Executive Director of the Minority Development Investment Corporation to replace Dennis Langley;**
- **Michael Evora, Executive Director of Commission on Human Rights to replace his colleague Angela Lovegrove;**
- **Joanne McGunagle, Executive Director of Comprehensive Community Action Program to replace Joe Caffey.**

**Current commissioners will continue to serve until Senate confirmation. Ms. Baxter extended her appreciation and acknowledged the dedication of Dennis, Angela and Joe for their efforts and contributions to the Housing Resources Commission. Their contributions to our work are too numerous to review, but each has been a strong voice for their constituency and for housing. We will miss their knowledge and support and look forward to continuing to work with them in the future.**

**The commission has requested reappointment of:**

- **Mark Van Noppen, representing Rhode Island Builder's Association**
- **Kathleen Bazinet, representing Community Development Corporations**
- **Kaveh Hajian, representing the homeless**
- **Roberta Hazen Aaronson – representing an agency addressing childhood lead poisoning.**

**These individuals have been submitted for Senate confirmation. We look forward to working with them for the next three years on the commission.**

### **Meeting Schedule**

**Two more meetings scheduled for 2008: July 18th and October 17th. At these meetings, our goal is to try to coordinate our approval of funding for Neighborhood Opportunities Program and Building Homes Rhode Island Bond Program. This schedule may change depending on the finalization of the 2009 budget. Commissioners will be informed as soon as possible about changes. We appreciate your flexibility during these challenging times.**

### **Coming Events**

**All Commissioners are invited to three upcoming events:**

- Wednesday, May 28, 2008 at 10:30 am, there will be a ribbon cutting for 213 Garden Street, Pawtucket, RI which received NOP funding.**
- Thursday, May 29, 2008, the Lead Hazard Mitigation Program will launch its web-based access to units that have Certificates of Conformance.**
- Monday, June 2, 2008, there will be a ribbon cutting for the Meadows, in North Smithfield. This development has both NOP and bond funds. This date maybe subject to change. Commissioners will be notified of any date change.**

**Resolution to Approve Funding: Building Homes Rhode Island Bond**

**Noreen Shawcross presented the commission with an overview of the resolution: Building Homes Rhode Island Bond which consists of:**

- Elmwood Foundation on Broad Street in Providence has 18 units**
- Operation Stand Down on Bissel Street in Providence will provide units for veterans Rockville Mill in Hopkinton will provide 8 units for low income individuals and families**
- Church Community Housing will provide 4 units**
- Urban League of RI will provide 4 units on Oxford Street**

**In March the Commissioners voted to amend our Building Homes Rhode Island Bond (BHRI) to cover NOP. The budget article in the supplemental provided \$2.5 million in the budget for the operating support of NOP and allows us to use BHRI for capitol funds. Marcy Coleman, Legal Counsel, approved as outlined in the budget article. The BHRI groups funded will not be harmed by the shift of some FY 08' BHRI awards to '09.**

**Steve O'Rourke moved to approve the resolution and Marilyn Kiesel seconded. It was unanimously approved.**

### **Resolution to Reduce Funding: Neighborhood Opportunities Program**

**Noreen Shawcross reported that we did not receive all operating money. We are proposing to reduce the \$600,000 by a reduction of \$28,586 which brings the current award to \$571,414. This reduction is**

**in operating funds only. Capitol funds remain secure. Steve O'Rourke moved to approve the resolution and Joe Caffey seconded. It was unanimously approved. No questions from HRC.**

## **Reports of the Offices**

### **Offices of Community Development & Technical Assistance and Homeownership**

**Ray Neirinckx reported about the direct serve link for his foreclosure work. The crisis requires him to provide direct advocacy with lenders. He is doing case work for individuals seeking assistance.**

**Jeanne Cola: Has a collection data been compiled why these properties are being foreclosed? What is the cause of this? What can we do to prevent this to happen again?**

**Ray Neirinckx: There are a combination of reasons why homes are being foreclosed. Federal Reserve has compiled data. Rhode Island leads the nation in percentage sub prime.**

**Joe Caffey: Ray is the best person in the RI assisting with foreclosure. He does a lot of work outside the scope of his job classification. I would like to request that Ray be given permission to conduct a class provide individuals with information pertaining to foreclosures.**

**Barbara Fields:** Can people be directed to other places to get assistance? Systems need to be developed so that Ray is not the only person providing assistance.

**Ray Neirinckx:** The Housing Network is an agency that people are being asked to contact for assistance. We are creating a coalition of partners with several organizations to look at the impact on what foreclosed homes are doing to families. Fannie Mae is an organization that we are working with for bulk sale.

**Noreen Shawcross:** While the HRC is not a direct service agency, we get calls for all sorts of people and issues. We do provide some assistance with what we can and with the resources we have.

**Chris Hannifan:** The HRC was never step up to be a direct service agency.

**Susan Bodington:** RIH continues to add temporary staff to assist. The state is in a huge crisis. Rhode Island Housing has extremely foreclosure rates. The problem is in one segment of the market.

**Jim Ryczek:** We do have to think about a systematic approach.

**Barbara Fields:** Where is the systemic approach? We need other agencies to be better funded to have staff trained by Ray to help with this crisis.



**Marilyn Kiesel: Hearing comments about houses that are vacant and foreclosed, how are they being financed and being brought to the agencies?**

**Chris Hannifan – Ray sits on the Foreclosure Task Force. They will assist in helping Ray with providing assistance to the public.**

#### **Office of Healthy Housing (Program Performance & Evaluation)**

**Doris De Los Santos has been working to get support for the lead hot line with the Department of Health. Noreen expressed her thanks to DOH for assisting with the lead hotline. This effort will help strengthen the system to provide services, gather data and improve units. Bob Vanderslice raised the issue of home based day care providers. DCYF is referring their 2,500 providers to DOH for action. DOH will be developing a fact sheet. Dealing with the issues of accepting a Certificate of Conformance is a challenge for day-care providers in renting and for providers that own their home that must be resolved with DCYF licensing. There are legal issues that DCYF was to consider.**

#### **Office of Homelessness Services & Emergency Assistance**

**Darlene Price reported on homelessness work. A new committee, headed by Mike Tondra, has been established to assist in gaps and services from the providers. The goal is to move individuals into permanent housing. The Governor's office sits on this committee.**

**The Homeless Management Information system (HMIS) is a web based system in which case managers input data on clients who come into the system. The Housing Locator works with folks to assist in housing. We work closely with Elderly Affairs to assist elderly who are in need of assistance. Noreen indicated that the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless manages these programs. The HRC keeps track of time spent helping individuals who call. We try to assist them and provide them with agencies they can contact for further assistance.**

#### **Office of Planning and Operations (Policy and Planning)**

**Noreen Shawcross reported for Simon Kue. Noreen reported that Simon handles all the finances for the HRC. He is working on plans for towns to improve their affordable housing outcomes. A plan is being developed to better coordinate with Rhode Island Housing about data collection around the Low-Mod Housing Act.**

#### **Public Comment Period**

**Noreen Shawcross announced that a presentation on the new initiative, Keep Space, will take place at the July meeting.**

**Ray Neirinckx reported that yesterday he attended a panel on US Commission on Civil Rights to learn about what is happening regarding foreclosure and what is happening at the state level.**

**Tom Kravitz indicated he wanted to improve performance of the work. What are we doing for education and outreach as part of HRC work? Noreen noted extensive work in these areas. Staff will provide reports for the next meeting.**

**Susan Baxter ended the meeting by stating that meetings begin at 8:30 a.m. and would appreciate everyone's cooperation.**

**The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 18, 2008 at 8:30 am, Conference Room A, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence. Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.**

## **Housing Resources Commission**

**May 16, 2008**

### **Report of Chair**

- Update on Housing Funding: State Budget**

**We are pleased that the Neighborhood Opportunities operating funds were one of the very few programs restored in the FY 2008 Supplemental Budget. While the funds were reduced to \$2.5 million, this amount will provide crucial operating funding necessary for developers to close the gap between what tenants can pay in rent and the cost of operating a unit. The funding was a cooperative effort between the administration and the General Assembly. Language in the Supplemental Budget specifies that this is solely for developments that were awarded NOP funds by the Commission on October 19, 2007.**

**Unfortunately, the funds taken from Rhode Island Housing in the Supplemental Budget will significantly reduce that agency's ability to support the Commission's efforts and mission.**

- Annual Report**

**All commissioners should have received a copy of the Annual Report that not only fulfills our legislative mandate, but reflects on all that has been accomplished in the past 10 years. July 1, 2008 is the "official" anniversary of the HRC being established.**

- Appointments to Commission**

**We are pleased to announce that the Governor has appointed the following to serve as members of the Housing Resources Commission due to term limits:**

**Denise Barge, Executive Director of the Minority Development Investment Corp-advocating the interest of racial minorities to replace Dennis Langley;**

**Michael Evora, Executive Director of the Commission on Human Rights-as a representative of fair housing interests to replace his colleague Angela Lovegrove;**

**and Joanne McGunagle, Executive Director of the Comprehensive Community Action Program-as a representative of a non-profit housing developer to replace Joe Caffey.**

**We are awaiting Senate confirmation and, until then, the current commissioners for these groups continue to serve. As we will not be meeting until July, and the new appointments may have been made by then, I do want to acknowledge the dedication of Dennis, Angela and Joe to the work of the Housing Resources Commission. Their contributions to our work are too numerous to review, but each has been a strong voice for their constituency and for housing. We will miss their knowledge and support at this table and look forward to continuing to work with them.**

**Report of the Chair**

**May 16, 2008**

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**Mark Van Noppen-representing Rhode Island Builder's Association**

**Kathleen Bazinet-representing Community Development Corporations**

**Kaveh Hajian-representing the homeless**

**Roberta Hazen Aaronson-representing an agency addressing childhood lead poisoning.**

**All have been submitted for Senate confirmation and we look forward to working with them for the next three years.**

- **Meeting Schedule**

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